

Buffalo Grove, IL - Congressman Mark Kirk brought together officials from Metra and leaders from communities who are serviced by the North-Central line for a summit to evaluate the North-Central line's current schedule.

Opened in January, Metra's North-Central line expansion was to give greater flexibility to daily commuters traveling to and from Chicago. Since the expanded service began, rail commuters, communities and businesses have raised complaints with Metra and Canadian National (CN), the owners of the North-Central tracks, over the lack of express trains, a poor reverse commute schedule and freight trains stopped on tracks for long periods of time. Kirk's summit allowed rail commuters, local leaders and community residents to voice complaints to Metra and offer suggestions on ways to improve the North-Central line's service.

"The input of our commuters and communities serviced by the North-Central line is vital to Metra's ongoing negotiations with CN to improve the North-Central line service," said Kirk. Over 200,000 residents of the 10th District are benefiting from the North-Central's expanded service, but it is important that the North-Central's schedule is flexible enough to meet their needs."

When expanded service began, Kirk asked Metra to formally review the line's schedule to see if there was a way to provide express trains. Metra has been negotiating with CN to provide additional trains and welcomed local leaders' and residents' complaints and suggestions to bolster their negotiations with CN.

Additionally, Metra has received complaints from suburban businesses that cannot provide shuttle service to and from train stations due to the North-Central's current schedule. CN has also received numerous complaints from communities serviced by the North-Central line about freight trains stopped on tracks for long periods of time.

"I am confident Metra and CN can improve the North-Central's service to meet our commuters' needs," Kirk said. "A more flexible schedule will improve the quality of life for northern Illinois families and help our communities meet their obligations under the Clean Air Act."

Negotiations will continue between Metra and CN to improve service on the North-Central Line. Kirk will meet with Metra and CN officials in 30 days to discuss what progress has been made in the negotiations.

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